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**Sent:** Fri 9/9/2016 8:07:50 PM  
**Subject:** Region 2 News Clips (PFCs)

**From:** Region2 PAD News <[Region2\\_PAD\\_News@epa.gov](mailto:Region2_PAD_News@epa.gov)>  
**Date:** September 9, 2016 at 9:12:41 AM EDT  
**To:** "R2 EPA Region 2 (EPA Staff)" <[R2\\_EPA\\_Region\\_2\\_EPA\\_Staff@epa.gov](mailto:R2_EPA_Region_2_EPA_Staff@epa.gov)>  
**Subject:** News Clips (PFCs)

## **POLITICO: Amid water quality fears, Newburgh awaits action on blood tests**

By Scott Waldman

09/09/16 05:27 AM EDT

ALBANY — Months after water in Newburgh tested positive for elevated rates of a toxic, cancer-linked chemical, the state does not have a plan to conduct blood tests for thousands of residents who likely consumed the polluted water for years.

A water quality hearing on Wednesday largely focused on water pollution issues in Hoosick Falls. A panel of about three dozen state lawmakers subjected the commissioners of the health and environmental conservation departments to five hours of often-intense grilling, most of it about the Rensselaer County village where PFOA was found in drinking water

Story Continued Below

There was far less discussion about how to address the situation in Newburgh, where the public water supply tested for more than twice the federal safety limit of PFOS. No one knows the contamination levels of the 30,000 people in Newburgh, which has a largely minority and low-income population, because widespread blood testing has not been conducted, as it has in Hoosick Falls and another town affected by PFOA pollution, Petersburg.

Biomonitoring in Hoosick Falls and Petersburg has revealed that hundreds of people have elevated levels of PFOA in their bloodstream. PFOA and PFOS are related chemicals and have been linked to cancer and other serious health issues. Public health experts have repeatedly said biomonitoring is essential for communities that have been exposed to the chemicals for an unknown period of time.

Newburgh's city manager has been calling for the tests for months. So has the environmental group Riverkeeper. Dan Shapley, Riverkeeper's water quality program manager, said the city's residents deserve to know if their health is at risk because the public water supply was polluted.

“Comprehensive health screening, consisting of blood testing, and bio-monitoring, has not been made available to city residents,” he said. “This is not how the crises in Hoosick Falls and in Petersburg have been handled. It is unconscionable and unjustifiable to treat these impacted communities differently.”

On Wednesday, state health commissioner Dr. Howard Zucker, after spending hours blasting the Obama administration for not responding quickly enough to Hoosick Falls, said he was waiting for guidance from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to determine what to do about biomonitoring in Newburgh.

“We’ve learned a lot from the biomonitoring there [in Hoosick Falls], but since this is a national issue across many areas, the goal is to work with our colleagues there at the CDC to find what are the best ways to move forward on a biomonitoring program”

Zucker said the state’s priority was to get the city’s water supply off of water tainted with PFOS.

In May, Newburgh’s main water source, Lake Washington, tested at more than 140 parts per trillion for Perfluorooctane sulfonate, or PFOS, which is about twice the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s recommended safety limit of 70 parts per trillion. The chemical is used in firefighting foam, particularly the type used at airports.

The state Department of Environmental Conservation recently declared the Stewart Air National Guard Base in Orange County a state Superfund site. The DEC found that the U.S. Department of Defense was a “potentially responsible party” for the PFOS contamination in Newburgh. The state is paying for the installation of a filter for the water supply.

Last month, Gov. Andrew Cuomo said the state would conduct blood testing in Newburgh if the “facts justify it.” Thus far, the state has not put forward a plan and Zucker avoided committing to any specific action on Newburgh, even when pressed by lawmakers.

“Regardless of what the levels may be, these people have gone through very difficult times and it’s hard for me to go back to them and say ‘you know you just didn’t get enough poison in your water,’” Assemblyman Frank Skartados, who represents the area, told Zucker.

On Thursday, Skartados said the Newburgh city council will soon pass a resolution calling for blood testing in the city.

### **Senator Gillibrand requires EPA to test all public water systems in U.S. for unregulated contaminants**

By Clarissa Schmidt

WASHINGTON (NEWS10) – On Thursday, U.S. Senator Kirsten Gillibrand introduced an amendment to the Water Resources Development Act that requires the Environmental

Protection Agency to expand water testing for unregulated contaminants to all public water systems.

Under the current law, the EPA is only required to test for unregulated contaminants in water systems serving over 10,000 people.

“With one-third of all New Yorkers and millions of Americans nationwide getting their drinking water from water sources not subject to testing by the EPA, the Senate must take action immediately to close the loophole that exempts smaller public water systems from inspection,” said U.S. Senator Kirsten Gillibrand. “My amendment would do that by requiring the EPA to test for all potential contaminants in all public water supplies. As we have seen from the devastating situation in the Hoosick Falls area, having a smaller population doesn’t mean a community is immune from a dangerous water contamination crisis. I urge all of my colleagues to support this amendment, so that the EPA can better protect our small towns and villages from disasters like the one that took place in Hoosick Falls.”

Senator Gillibrand has made persistent efforts to urge the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee, EPA, Centers for Disease Control and the National Institute of Health to address the issues in Hoosick Falls and Petersburg.

This past May, she urged the EPA to quicken the clean-up of Hoosick Falls by designating it as a federal Superfund site.

She also sent a letter to Senator and Chairman of the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee, James Inhofe, in February 2016 requesting a hearing on PFOA effects in drinking water.

During this past June, Senator Gillibrand also asked the EPA to use new authority provided by the Toxic Substances Control Act to decide if PFOA should be restricted or banned at the federal level.

Most recently, Senator Gillibrand wrote to the Directors of the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences at NIH and the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry at CDC in July, urging them to prioritize research into the health effects of PFOA.

She also asked the two agencies to outline the resources and authority they need in order to conduct research and clarify gaps in understanding the health effects of PFOA.

### **Sen. Gillibrand Calls for Closing a Water Testing Loophole**

TWC News / Web Staff

Thursday, September 8, 2016 at 06:48 PM EDT

Just one day after a water quality hearing in New York, Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand is calling for a change, to close a loophole in current water testing laws.

Current law requires the Environmental Protection Agency to test for unregulated contaminants in only 188 of New York's 9,000 public water supplies.

The law does not apply to water systems with less than 10,000 people or to private wells.

Gov. Cuomo and the state Department of Health Commissioner called for closing that loophole Wednesday.

And Thursday, Gillibrand proposed an amendment that would require the EPA to test for contaminants in all public water supplies across the country.

She says this will help protect small towns and villages, which are just as prone to disaster as bigger cities.

WRGB

### **After hearings, questions linger for Hoosick Falls residents**

BY HUBERT WIGGINS THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 8TH 2016

HOOSICK FALLS -- Loreen Hackett has lived all but a few years of her life in Hoosick Falls. When the New York State Department of Health mailed PFOA blood test results in May, Hackett's levels were among the highest of village residents tested.

She was part of the group of residents clamoring for state hearings to delve into the PFOA contamination of the village's drinking water. Hackett spoke at last month's Senate hearing in Hoosick Falls and attended last night's Assembly hearing in Albany. She wonders now that the hearings are over what will happen next. "The whole issue of how to deal with toxic chemicals needs to be addressed. Should it be in the Health Department's hands or should a new water authority be made," Ms. Hackett said.

Michelle Baker sat through the entire hearing on Wednesday. "No one apologized to us from the New York State Department of Health; no one said I'm sorry. No one offered solutions; we really didn't get any answers," Ms. Baker said.

CBS 6 asked the DEC what is their next series of actions in regards to the contamination issue on Hoosick Falls. A spokesman sent this statement: "DEC is now requiring St. Gobain and Honeywell to undertake a full investigation of the area to determine the full nature and extent of the contamination, as well as develop the appropriate remediation plan to address PFOA contamination. DEC will oversee the development and implementation of the work plans and investigations."

### **Hoosick Falls residents hope water hearings will bring answers, accountability**

Hoosick Falls, N.Y. residents watch, hope for accountability while lawmakers grill officials over water issue

By Edward Damon

[benningtonbanner.com](http://benningtonbanner.com)

POSTED: 09/08/2016 10:04:25 PM EDT

HOOSICK FALLS, N.Y. — While lawmakers and state officials are battling on the political stage, residents of this small village are waiting for accountability and answers.

Legislators grilled state health officials on Wednesday at the first of two joint Assembly and Senate hearings to probe the state response to PFOA contamination and statewide water quality. The next is slated for Monday on Long Island. A Senate hearing was held in the village on Aug. 30.

What's come out of the contentious hearings so far has left resident Michelle O'Leary feeling discouraged. While she said she wants officials to be held accountable, she called finger pointing between state environmental and health commissioners and the federal Environmental Protection Agency "counter productive."

"We feel like we don't have a lot of answers," O'Leary said.

Residents need a plan to help with future medical issues and a biomonitoring study to track their health, she said. She also wants to know when the village will get a new water source: She doesn't trust filters to remove PFOA from the tap water. She says she doesn't drink it and cringes even just washing her hands.

Robert Allen said he wasn't interested in politics until about a year ago. Allen, a music teacher at Hoosick Falls Central School District who lives in the village with his wife and children, says he's read hundreds of pages of news articles, research, and emails between public officials about the PFOA issue. Allen also created two videos about the water issue and posted them online.

#### Advertisement

Allen referred to emails released by records request that indicate health officials knew about PFOA in the water for months and talked-down health risks of PFOA.

"Out of all of the departments in the state that you wouldn't want that kind of culture," Allen said, "you'd think it would be the health department."

Residents were told not to drink village tap water in December because it contained elevated levels of PFOA, or perfluorooctanoic acid, a man-made chemical formerly used to manufacture Teflon products.

EPA officials on Wednesday proposed adding a suspected source, a McCaffrey Street factory, to the federal Superfund program. The move would provide funds for a cleanup and gives the EPA legal authority to make polluters pay. That process could take years.

Saint-Gobain Performance Plastics has owned the McCaffrey Street site since 1999. Both Saint-Gobain and Honeywell International agreed to consent orders with New York in June that require them to study and clean up contamination on four current and former factory sites.

Allen, in his latest video, tracks the timeline since PFOA was discovered in the municipal water system two years ago. The full nine-minute video, titled "PFOA, Hoosick Falls, NYS Department of Health's Failed Response, and What is Needed Next," is on Youtube: <http://bit.ly/2cxnxdm>. Allen said the video is meant to simply and quickly explain information about PFOA and related chemicals.

"At the same time, I wanted to point out and call into question the truth of what government, in particular the [Department of Health], has been doing and how they've been doing it," Allen said.

The video questions whether the state's blood tests for PFOA go far enough, and why Gov. Andrew Cuomo didn't visit the village until a Sunday in March of this year.

Allen said he was originally split on whether the hearings would be productive, but now thinks residents "are closer to having definitive answers and progress."

O'Leary said that many residents waited 12 hours to speak at Wednesday's hearings, but didn't get to speak.

"People who should be really giving input were once again ignored," she said.

O'Leary spearheaded the water delivery volunteer group "Water Angels" this winter. She said she encountered residents in February who hadn't heard about the no-drink order issued two months prior.

"It wears you down," O'Leary said. "But I don't want to give up on this issue because I've met so many amazing people."

The written testimony submitted to the Senate hearing on Aug. 30 is available online at: <http://bit.ly/2cox2YL>

Written testimony submitted to the joint Assembly and Senate hearing on Sept. 7 is online here: <http://bit.ly/2c2UKfe>

## **Legislators grill health officials on poisoned drinking water**

By Kyle Hughes, NYSNYS News

Posted: 09/08/16, 7:18 AM EDT | Updated: 20 hrs ago

ALBANY >> Legislators demanded answers Wednesday from Health Commissioner Dr. Howard Zucker about why the state waited more than a year to warn residents of Hoosick Falls to stop drinking water contaminated by a toxic chemical.

"It seems to me we are intent again on blaming the EPA and taking absolutely no responsibility for any of this in Hoosick Falls," Assemblyman Steve McLaughlin (R-Melrose) said at the hearing. "There's a nice game going on -- you're going to blame the EPA and push responsibility onto the village which is a small village. Meanwhile the DOH continues to say we didn't do anything wrong."

"The members up here aren't quite buying the fact that DOH holds no responsibility in this."

"Assemblyman, you know, I take issue to some of your statements," Zucker said, interrupting McLaughlin's questioning. He said the Health Department worked closely with village leaders.

"I sense there is much anxiety and stress in the community," Zucker said. "It's palpable and it's appropriately palpable that they feel worried about their water and I understand." McLaughlin then cut in when Zucker declared "I think when you say that we didn't care about the village, that's a --"

"I didn't say that," McLaughlin said, saying his question was why state officials did not take steps to tell people to not drink the water until 18 months after they first learned the supply was contaminated with Perfluorooctanoic acid, or PFOA, a toxic chemical.

"I think I can speak for my constituents in Hoosick Falls when I say they had a right to be notified and you did not do it," McLaughlin said.

Gov. Andrew Cuomo and his top aides have come under sharp criticism for their delayed response to the water crisis in Hoosick Falls and surrounding community. In turn the governor and aides have blamed federal regulators for not doing more and sought to put the crisis in a larger context.

At a hearing last week in Hoosick Falls, Zucker said bottled water can be contaminated. Wednesday, he went further afield, drawing an analogy with the FAA and federal airspace regulation when trying to explain why the state didn't act independently of the EPA on drinking water standards.

That drew yet another rebuke from McLaughlin, a commercial airline pilot before he became a state legislator.

As the hearing took place Wednesday, the EPA announced it has nominated the Saint-Gobain Performance Plastics manufacturing plant in Hoosick Falls to the federal Superfund list. The plant used PFOA in the manufacture of products containing teflon and is believed to be the source of much of the pollution.

Also Wednesday, Cuomo called for mandatory testing of smaller water delivery systems, requiring homeowners to test wells before a property can be sold, and require landlords to test water supplies and notify tenants. Current water testing regulations focus on large municipal or private system serving many thousands of customers.

Legislators had Zucker and to a lesser extent Environmental Conservation Commissioner Basil Seggos in the hot seat answering questions for five hours Wednesday. A third

hearing is scheduled this month on Long Island.

Wednesday, Senate Finance Commission Chair John DeFrancisco (R-Syracuse) expressed incredulity that the Health Department would issue a fact sheet saying the water was safe to drink despite the presence of a known toxic chemical and a December 2015 EPA advisory to not drink the water.

"Tell me, how did the EPA fool you?" he asked Zucker sarcastically.

He pressed Zucker to detail the methodology the Health Department used as the basis to tell residents the water was safe to use, but Zucker would not answer directly and continued to point a finger at the Environmental Protection Agency for not having clearer guidelines for the state to follow.

With no answers forthcoming, DeFrancisco declared "I give," prompting laughter. He posed similar questions without receiving firm answers at a hearing a week ago in Hoosick Falls that saw Zucker cite "confusion" as the reason why the Cuomo administration didn't do more.

McLaughlin chided Lloyd Wilson, the head of the Health Department's Bureau of Water Supply Protection, for telling legislators he was "stressed" by having to testify at the hearing, the second of three scheduled on the growing problems of contaminated drinking water in New York.

"Stressed and tired is the parents of Hoosick Falls when they opened up those envelopes and saw the blood level numbers of their children," prompting cheers and applause from community members in the audience.

"I was not looking for sympathy," Wilson responded. "I just wanted to make sure if I would have said something that insulted somebody by accident, it was because of being stressed, not because I was looking for sympathy. I do not have any sense that I deserve any sympathy so that's -- I really don't like that question."

"It wasn't a question, it was statement," McLaughlin shot back.

The questioning of Zucker was scheduled to be followed by another eight panels of witnesses scheduled to testify on problems with public water supplies around the state.

TIMES UNION

## **Sharp exchanges mark second water hearing**

### **Lawmakers grill agency chiefs on response to Hoosick Falls crisis**

By Matthew Hamilton and Casey Seiler

Published 11:11 pm, Wednesday, September 7, 2016



## Albany

The hot seat was considerably hotter for top state officials on Wednesday, when Howard Zucker of the Department of Health and Basil Seggos of the Department of Environmental Conservation spent almost five hours fielding questions from the second legislative hearing to delve into the water contamination crisis in Rensselaer County.

As in last week's initial hearing in Hoosick Falls — a session hosted by the state Senate — much of the testimony from the agency chiefs included repeated complaints that the state's response to the discovery of high levels of perfluorooctanoic acid first discovered by a local citizen's testing in 2014 was hobbled by what they characterized as confusing advisories from the federal Environmental Protection Agency.

A former Health Department official, however, said the agency had a tendency to minimize potential health risks when conducting public outreach.

The day's more charged exchanges included a confrontation between Zucker and Assemblyman Steve McLaughlin, R-Schaghticoke, who represents part of the region affected by PFOA contamination in the water supply.

McLaughlin, who had been pressing for legislative hearings for months, began by upbraiding one of Zucker's colleagues for previously mentioning his stress and fatigue levels while dealing with the crisis in Hoosick Falls — anxiety the village's residents might understand more keenly, the lawmaker suggested.

"Assemblyman, I take issue to some of your statements," Zucker said, insisting he and the agency's staff understood the upset felt by local residents. Many have levels of PFOA in their systems many times the national average, according to recent blood tests.

McLaughlin then asked Zucker, "Would you have let your mother drink that water for 18 months?" — a reference to the gap in time between Hoosick Falls resident Michael Hickey's first test results and the state's eventual December 2016 advisory that residents shouldn't drink from the village water supply or any other system with PFOA levels above 400 parts per trillion.

Zucker said the question of what happened in 2014 and 2015 was obscuring the real problem of corporate pollution. "The concern is drinking (the water) for decades," he told McLaughlin.

In another pointed exchange, Assemblyman Tom Abinanti, D-Westchester, hit Zucker for reliance on federal guidance. "I'm not sure why we have you guys," Abinanti said in reference to DOH and DEC. "You're the ones who are responsible for protecting the people of the state of New York, not the EPA."

Zucker responded that he respectfully disagreed with the characterizations of the state's work on water quality. "We've been extremely proactive," he said.

As Wednesday's hearing was about to begin, Gov. Andrew Cuomo's administration released a letter penned by Zucker and Seggos and sent to the EPA's Administrator Gina McCarthy demanding she "close a loophole in federal oversight" that exempts water

systems serving less than 10,000 people from the Unregulated Contaminant Monitoring Rule, which requires testing of substances such as PFOA. The state estimates that 2.5 million New Yorkers use water from such systems.

At the same time, the Cuomo administration pledged to put forward state legislation should the EPA not act on that request. Another piece of proposed legislation would require testing of the 1.1 million private wells statewide upon the sale of property and construction of a new well.

Zucker, Seggos and other state officials spent even more time at the hearing describing the arduous processes of testing for PFOA in the Hoosick Falls area — including having to retrofit the state's Wadsworth Laboratory to properly test samples for the chemical — and defending their timeline of steps taken to determine PFOA's presence and effects and to mitigate its presence.

"I think as you look to our actions through the whole course of the event, we never, ever thought we shouldn't do something about it," said Lloyd Wilson of DOH's Water Supply Protection Bureau.

But the former head of DOH's Center for Environmental Health told the panel that the unit he led for 31/2 years has a troubling tendency to downplay potential health risks from toxic contaminants.

In his testimony, Dr. Howard Freed emphasized that while CEH never lied to the public, "DOH always downplays the risk ... and always emphasizes the scientific uncertainties of any papers that suggest that PFOA may be causing major health problems."

Freed led CEH for 31/2 years beginning in 2008, and said he worked to adjust the unit's culture from what he termed a "minimizer" mindset to one that emphasized a "precautionary principle" that gave more weight to potential risks.

"Always minimizing the risk of ingesting toxins in drinking water is a pattern of behavior doomed to fail the people of New York," Freed said. "Routine reassurance cannot be justified in the face of our profound scientific ignorance about the health effects of long-term exposure to PFOA."

In response to Freed, DOH spokesman Jim Plastiras said, "The former director's critique of his own job performance has no bearing on the fact that the Department has consistently pointed out the health effects associated with PFOA and the need to remove the contaminant from the water supply."

Another legislative hearing on water quality will be held Monday on Long Island, which has dealt with contamination of its own. Assembly Environmental Conservation Committee Chairman Steve Englebright said it's likely a third legislative hearing will be necessary.

Also dealt with in Wednesday hearing was contamination by a related substance, perfluorooctanesulfonic acid, in Newburgh's water supplies. Amid questions of if and when the state will perform blood testing of residents in that Hudson Valley community, Zucker said the federal government is looking into the best approach for biomonitoring, and promised he would personally contact the Centers for Disease Control to find out if they

have settled on that best approach.

Petersburgh interim Town Supervisor Alan Webster, whose Rensselaer County community is also dealing with PFOA contamination, called for more of that kind of cross-governmental coordination. "We need to put an end to the war of the pronouns and focus on one," Webster said. "That is 'we.'"

NCPR

### **Cuomo officials grilled on Hoosick Falls water crisis**

by Karen DeWitt (NYS Capitol Correspondent) , in Albany, NY

Sep 08, 2016 — Governor Andrew Cuomo's health commissioner faced an intense grilling from lawmakers Wednesday at a joint hearing on how the administration handled water contamination in the eastern New York village of Hoosick Falls.

Cuomo's administration has been accused of failing for 18 months to inform Hoosick Falls residents that their water might be contaminated with the toxic chemical perfluorooctanoic acid, and unsafe to drink. PFOA is used in Teflon manufacturing, among other uses, and is linked to cancer.

Legislators, both Democrats and Republicans, intently questioned Health Department Commissioner Howard Zucker and other administration officials to find out what they knew about the PFOA contamination — and when.

Zucker, testifying under oath, blamed the federal Environmental Protection Agency for any mix-up, saying they kept making "sudden" changes on their guidelines for safe levels of PFOA for human consumption, and the state health department struggled to keep up. "There were inconsistencies," Zucker said.

But Senator John DeFrancisco said the health department needs to explain an even bigger inconsistency. Why, he asked, did the department distribute a fact sheet to village residents saying the water was safe to drink, in December of 2015, after federal EPA administrator Judith Enck in November 2015 had warned residents in a town meeting not to drink the water, and after state health officials had already helped distribute bottled water and installed filtration systems. "I can't understand, for the life of me," DeFrancisco said.

Zucker answered that one day after the EPA administrator issued her warning, the state health department acted. "The next day we complied with that," Zucker said.

A spokesman for Governor Cuomo said later that the health department did change some language in its fact sheet. It changed the phrase "people may consider use of bottled water" for drinking and food preparation, written on December 3, 2015 to "people should use bottled water" on December 18.

But, DeFrancisco asked, why then did DOH not change the fact sheet and tell residents the water was not OK to drink?

“Doctor, I don’t think there’s anybody that can read the English language that can confuse the determination by the health department that the water is not dangerous to people,” said DeFrancisco. “Is there any other interpretation?”

Zucker finally conceded the health department could have done better. “That fact sheet probably could have been clearer for the public,” Zucker said.

Tests conducted this year by the health department found hundreds of residents in Hoosick Falls with very high levels of PFOA in their blood.

Zucker and other health department officials, in addition to blaming the EPA for any confusion, also pointed the finger at the polluter, Saint-Gobain, which was invited to testify but declined. The company may be subpoenaed to appear at a later hearing.

The health officials also cast doubt on village leaders’ efforts, and even blamed landlords for not informing tenants about the potential safety of their water.

That led Assemblyman Steve McLaughlin, who represents Hoosick Falls, to finally explode, “There’s a nice game going on.” He said he and other legislators weren’t “buying it.”

“Meanwhile, DOH continues to say, ‘We didn’t do anything wrong,’” McLaughlin said. “It’s distressing to hear that.”

While the hearing continued, there was a new development. The EPA declared Hoosick Falls a federal Superfund site.

Madison County Courier - 59 minutes ago

### **Gillibrand’s amendment to the Water Resources Development Act would require EPA to test for all contaminants in all public water supplies**

PHOTO Kirsten Gillibrand

U.S. Senator Kirsten Gillibrand, a member of the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee, today introduced an amendment to the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) that would require the EPA to expand water testing for unregulated drinking water contaminants to all public water supplies. Currently, the EPA is only required to test for unregulated contaminants in water systems serving over 10,000 people.

“With one-third of all New Yorkers and millions of Americans nationwide getting their drinking water from water sources not subject to testing by the EPA, the Senate must take action immediately to close the loophole that exempts smaller public water systems from inspection,” said U.S. Senator Kirsten Gillibrand. “My amendment would do that by requiring the EPA to test for all potential contaminants in all public water supplies. As we have seen from the devastating situation in the Hoosick Falls area, having a smaller population doesn’t mean a community is immune from a dangerous water contamination

crisis. I urge all of my colleagues to support this amendment, so that the EPA can better protect our small towns and villages from disasters like the one that took place in Hoosick Falls.”

Senator Gillibrand has been urging the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee, as well as the EPA, Centers for Disease Control (CDC), and the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to take action to address the situation in Hoosick Falls, Hoosick, and Petersburg.

In May 2016, Senator Gillibrand urged the EPA to expedite the clean-up of Hoosick Falls, by designating it as a federal Superfund site. Senator Gillibrand also sent a letter to Senator James Inhofe, Chairman of the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee, in February 2016 requesting that the committee hold a hearing to examine the effects of PFOA on drinking water in the United States. In June 2016, Senator Gillibrand called on the EPA to use the new authority provided by the recently reformed Toxic Substances Control Act to determine if PFOA should be restricted or banned at the federal level. She also asked the NIH and the CDC to do all they can to provide information and assistance to the residents of Hoosick Falls, Hoosick, and Petersburg regarding the health effects of PFOA exposure.

Most recently, Senator Gillibrand wrote to the Directors of the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences at NIH and the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry at CDC in July 2016 urging the agencies to prioritize research into the health effects of PFOA exposure and asking the agencies to outline the resources and legislative authority they need to conduct and support research to fill in the current gaps in our understanding of the health effects of PFOA.

The Intelligencer (PA)

### **Sen. Stewart Greenleaf calls on Navy to pay for water**

By Kyle Bagenstose, staff writer

18 hrs ago

On Tuesday, state Sen. Stewart Greenleaf, R-12, Upper Moreland, kept up pressure from legislators on the military to do more to resolve local drinking water contamination, specifically calling on the Navy to offset recent rate hikes in area water bills.

In a letter to Steven Iselin, assistant secretary of the Navy, Greenleaf conveyed concerns from Horsham and Warminster residents about the increasing costs of their water bills. Water authorities in those two towns have begun purchasing millions of gallons of water from the North Wales Water Authority, because that supply does not contain perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) and perfluorooctane sulfonate (PFOS), unregulated chemicals that have contaminated water in Warminster, Horsham and Warrington.

As reported previously by this news organization, the Warminster Municipal Authority and Horsham Water & Sewer Authority both recently sent letters to their customers alerting

them to rate increases. For an average customer, the increase will reach more than \$100 annually in Warminster, and just below that amount in Horsham.

“My constituents, who are the victims here, should not have to bear this extra expense due to a contamination issue that is completely the result of (military) activities,” Greenleaf wrote. “It is simply outrageous to see victims — those whose health has been compromised by this negligence — forced to shoulder such a financial burden.”

The letter is the latest manifestation of growing friction between local legislators, residents and township officials on one side, and the military on the other. The Navy and National Guard Bureau have taken responsibility for the contamination because PFOA and PFOS were ingredients of firefighting foams used at a trio of former and current military bases in the area.

Since summer 2014, 16 public water wells and about 150 private wells have been closed in Warminster, Horsham and Warrington because the chemicals were found above 70 parts per trillion — the limit recommended by an Environmental Protection Agency life advisory.

The 70 ppt limit has become a key point of contention. The military has agreed to spend tens of millions of dollars to install filtration systems on public wells above that limit, and pay for replacement water in the meantime. But not for those below 70 ppt.

Answering calls from concerned residents to remove the chemicals to nondetectable levels (less than 5 ppt), the Horsham and Warminster water authorities have moved to purchase uncontaminated water from North Wales, while Warrington works on a similar plan.

Tim Hagey, general manager with the Warminster Municipal Authority, said last week the authority is submitting a proposal to the military that it begin footing the bill, and may consider legal action if it is denied.

In a letter sent to its customers, the Horsham Water & Sewer Authority wrote that it “and Horsham Township Council feel that the residents of Horsham are entitled to water that is free of PFOS and PFOA and that the military has an obligation to fully remediate the local groundwater resources.”

In his letter, Greenleaf also called on the military to pay.

“I must reiterate my request that the Navy act quickly to abide by its stated commitment to protect the health and well-being of residents and to fully fund whatever remediation efforts are deemed necessary to ensure access to clean water,” Greenleaf wrote.

Other legislators, ranging from state representatives up to Pennsylvania Gov. Tom Wolf, have also called on the military to increase its response to area contamination, including the funding of blood tests for residents. In July, state Rep. Todd Stephens, R-151, of Horsham, also worked to secure \$10 million in state funding to pay for additional filtration systems for Horsham to clean its wells.

However, that money cannot be used to cover the increased costs of purchased water, and Stephens joined Greenleaf on Thursday in calling for the military to provide more funding.

“For months I have been demanding the federal government fulfill its obligations to our community by eliminating all detectable levels of these contaminants,” Stephens wrote in an email to this news organization. “They came into our towns and polluted our water and should be the ones paying to clean it up.”

# # #